

MEDIEVAL CHURCH REPAIR AND EMBELLISHING

Wills are a very good source for discovering the history of individual churches. Many testators left money to the fabric of local churches, chapels, and allied buildings, occasionally specifying it was for ‘the new work’, which indicates that work was already in progress there.

Also I biqueth ... £200 thereof for to newe make and edifie a chapell annexed and to be sett to and in the south partie of the parrish church of Saint Dunston forsaide [*in the East*] in the church yerde their called the Pardone churchyerde ... and pewes and sittynges convenient and necessarie ... Also I biqueth to the beldyng of a chapell or somme other hous in the forsaide parrish of Colwych ... 10 marc [£6 13s.4d.]. ... Item I wull that their be ordeined a convenient hallyng be it for sommyr or for wynter for the commyne halle of the vikers of the cloos of Wellys in Somersett shire ... Also I will that my executors ensure that the new work begun about the high altar in the cathedral church of Lincoln be completed in *le carpenre werke* and *le kerving werke* as far as the beam ... on condition that Master John Waltham, an executor of my will and principal supervisor of the aforesaid work, should have licence to be absent and to come and go about that work as often as need be ... Item he did biquathe to the college of All Soules in Oxenford toward the bilding of their newe cloistre £20. ...

Rich testators might ask for chapels to be made and equipped to contain their tombs:

... my body to be buried within the chirch of the frere prechours of Worcestre in a new chapell there now to be made on the north side of the quere ... I will that ther be made with my goodes within the chirch of the seid freris ... a chapell of lyme and stone with a tombe in the same ... also ... that ther be made a convenient ymage of alabastre uppon my seid tombe ...and for thapparelyng of the aulter in my seid chapell ... a gilt chalis with a paten, ij corporasses casses ... a vestment of rede velvett with thorffrees of cloth of gold ...

Others left money for more modest tombs to be constructed:

I will that I have there a little tombe made parte therof within the wall and that other parte withoute with a picture of laton and scripture witnessing and shewing my lying there, to the making of the which tombe I bequeth 10 mark. ... I will that my tomb be covered with a marble stone to the value of 26s.8d. ...

Money is often left for specific repairs or embellishing of churches and chapels:

I leave 20s. to buy a new image of St Katherine there. ... I yeve and bequeth to the gylding of the rodelofte 10s. sterlinges. ... For the gilding of the tabernacles of saint Mighell and saint George in the quyre of the chirch aforseid £40. ... *Item* I will that my seid executrice ... do reforme the glas wyndowe being in the north wall of the seid chapell ... and also do new pewe the same chapell with clenly pewes and also do cyele the roof therof with estrichbord or fyne oken bord as clenly as yt may resonable be don ... to the performyng wherof I will that she ... spend of my goodes £40. ... I bequeth to the reparation of the rodeloft in my parish chirch ... *summa* 40 marcs. ... Also I give to the fabric of the *theofonoforium* of the said church 5 marks, also another 5 marks for making a glass window with images in the south part of the chancel ... also I will that my executors provide two small alabaster figures to be placed in the lower part of the *theofonoforium* ...